

The Loggerhead



A regional Southeast Asia newsletter
covering issues on environment, science, technology and health

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The Southeast Asia Regional Environmental Affairs webpage:

bangkok.usembassy.gov/embassy/reo.htm



Ambassador John with delegates at Bangkok Airport to Launch Campaign to Stop Wildlife Trafficking on 9 March 2009. © Freeland

Campaign to Stop Wildlife Trafficking

The Airports of Thailand (AOT) authority has joined the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) in a campaign to prevent wildlife trafficking and prosecute traffickers. ASEAN-WEN, which is supported by USAID and the U.S. State Department, launched the public awareness campaign at the Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, which serves more than 30 million passengers annually. The campaign features illuminated posters and screens throughout the airport, particularly at the immigration gates and check-in booths in the departure hall. ASEAN-WEN is also training AOT staff to identify illegal wildlife and enforce national and international wildlife trade laws. Ambassador John and the Minister of Environment spoke at the kickoff of the Airport as a "wildlife trafficking-free" zone. NGOs Freeland and Traffic, supported by USAID began a series of training courses for Airport officials on interception of wildlife trafficking.

Reintroduction of Siamese Crocodiles



Siamese Crocodiles at Samutprakam Farm

On 18 December 2008 REO staff in Bangkok took a trip to surrounding provinces to learn about the Siamese crocodile industry and current efforts to release this species into natural habitats around Thailand.

Thailand has a strong crocodile industry for tourism and commercial purposes. The Siamese crocodile population is thriving in the crocodile farms, with several hundred thousand on various farms through out the country. However there are possibly less than 50 Siamese crocodiles in Thailand's wildlife, as a result this species are listed as endangered under the United States [Endangered Species Act](#).

Thai government officials as well as those in the commercial crocodile industry are eager to work together and reintroduce Siamese crocodiles into their natural habitats. Industry officials are interested in getting the Siamese crocodile off the endangered species list because it prohibits the sale of their merchandise in the United States. But for Siamese crocodile products to be considered for importation into the U.S., the farming industry would probably need to help make real progress in reintroduction of the species into the wild.

Currently there is a pilot project at Pang Sida National park. In 2004 ten baby Siamese crocodiles were released into the park. In 2005 a monitoring and verification trip to the site spotted two of the crocodiles.

In 2006 ten more Siamese crocodiles were released in the park. Officials would like to increase the population to 200, the maximum this park space can comfortably sustain. Researchers have identified two other sites; Bung Boraphet and Kaeng Krachan National Park but face a lack of funding, the threat of poaching and humans frightened of living in close proximity to the crocodiles.

Current proposals have been submitted to Thai government officials on steps for moving forward and rebuilding the wildlife population of the Siamese crocodile.

U.S. - South Korea International Tuberculosis Research Center (ITRC)

On 2 March 2009 Ambassador Stephens and Health Minister Jeon Jae-hee launched the 3 year old joint ITRC as an independent foundation. ITRC is the most significant collaborative health project the U.S. undertakes with Korea. The primary mission is the discovery and development of new medicines to combat Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (XDR-TB), which have emerged in recent years as a serious and growing global health threat.

The Center is equally funded, USD one million annually each, by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Korean Ministry of Health, Welfare and Family Affairs. Doctors and technologists from the NIH visit throughout the year in both a management and technical capacity. Since the research at the ITRC will benefit tuberculosis patients around the world, including those in developing countries, the ITRC is an example of the U.S.-Korea partnership transcending the Peninsula and engaging in issues of global concern. Collaboration between the ITRC, NIH, and researchers at Yeshiva University in New York has resulted in the first new class of compounds that could potentially be approved for the treatment of TB. An upcoming issue of [Science](#) magazine will discuss this promising new approach.

Clouded Leopard and Small Felids Summit



Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary

The Regional Environmental Office in Bangkok participated in the first ever Clouded Leopard and small felids workshop held at Kasetsart University January 28-30, 2009.

Over fifty field researchers, educators, NGO representa-

tatives, and zoo staff currently working on clouded leopard, small felid research, and conservation issues in the Southeast Asian range countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia participated.

Key issues addressed were the conservation of clouded leopards and other small Southeast Asian felids, including issues relating to field study, trade, and community education/social marketing. Preliminary action steps to begin the development of a long-term clouded leopard/small felid conservation plan were identified. The summit included a press event and the [Bangkok Post](#) picked up the story on January 31, 2009. Following the summit there was a three day field visit Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary located in the Chaiyaphum province of Thailand.

Lao/Thai Ranger Training

NGO Freeland (formerly PeunPa/Wildaid) conducted law enforcement training for Laotian and Thai forest rangers, with help from the Thai Border Police. Observers from the two Indian states of Assam and Uttarakhand States were there to see how ASEAN-WEN could be a model for the South Asian wildlife enforcement network. Hub officer role-played as a poacher in the final night field exercise as the Thais and Laotians worked in teams to "arrest" him.

Special Investigation Group (SIG) Workshop

In January the Royal Thai Police, USAID-funded ASEAN-WEN support group and INTERPOL held a SIG workshop at the **International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA)** headquarters in Bangkok to discuss illegal trade of Pangolin's and Big Cats. Workshop attendees included top law enforcement official representatives from the, US Fish and Wildlife Service, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. The participation of China, as the major regional consumer of trafficked wildlife, was especially welcome. The goals of the workshop were to exchange information and knowledge among countries; design methods for the exchange of trans-boundary information; and drafting a plan for next steps.

Country representatives gave presentations on specific examples and current efforts to collect intelligence and stop the trading and smuggling of Pangolins and Big Cats. Discussions focused on the need for more training, capacity building, and communication among countries in order to capture and stop future illegal wildlife trading. Interpol representatives offered to serve as a medium and set up a database that countries could use to share information with each other. The major successes of the workshop were adopting common law enforcement intelligence sharing forms and the development of working groups among country groupings of wildlife networks, for example Thailand and Malaysia.

German Climate Initiative in Thailand

In February GTZ, an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development, held a kick off conference on climate change in Bangkok Thailand. German Ambassador Schumacher started the meeting by noting how important the issue of climate change is for the world.

Keynote speaker Charivat Santaputra from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted how the government of Thailand will take steps to address the issue of climate change.

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German Climate Change Initiative In Thailand (cont'd)

Six projects were presented at the meeting, GTZ will assist with technical, financial, and capacity building. Thailand will focus on developing the agriculture and food industry to be self sufficient; better manage water resources; work with the private sector to abate the threat of climate change; support reforestation projects; and look for alternative and renewable sources of energy. Thailand will also work with ASEAN partners to develop strategic policies and action plans.

Methane to Markets (M2M) at the World Alternative Energy Sciences Expo 2009

On March 5th -8th the Ministry of Science and Technology along with Chulalongkorn University in Thailand organized the First World Alternative Energy Sciences Expo. The expo promotes the use of alternative energy from bio fuel, solar, wind, biogas, biomass, waste energy and hydrogen fuel cells. EPA's Kurt Roos presented the U.S. Methane to Markets program. The hub set up a booth for USG and U.S. firms to display posters. It was impressive how many Thai government, academic and business firms are engaged in research, development and production of alternative energy.

Launched in 2004, M2M is an international initiative with the goal of advancing cost-effective, near-term methane recovery to use as a clean energy source. According to the [US Government's Methane to Markets Partnership Accomplishments](#), fully implemented projects will reduce annual methane emission by a level equal 24 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. That's the equivalent of taking more than 4 million passenger vehicles off the road according to [EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#).

In April 2008 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded \$700,000 to Thailand's Livestock Environmental Development Division under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation to reduce methane release from swine farms.

These funds will go to twelve farms that with assistance from the Development of Livestock Division will construct biogas systems to eliminate methane gas that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. A total of 84,165 tons of CO₂ will be sequestered the first year of this project. This project will be a model for the M2M partnership and will be easy to replicate in the swine sector.

Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT)

Certifying Tropical Forests in Malaysia. Under USAID's RAFT program, WWF Malaysia is working in collaboration with the Sabah State Forestry Department to begin certifying 270,000 hectares of tropical forest using the [Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\)](#) certification standards at the Ulu Segama Malua (USM) forest management unit in southeastern Sabah, located on the Malaysian side of Borneo. The certification process will take around two years to complete and involves forest restoration, high conservation value assessments, resolution of any pending community conflicts and setting up best forest management practices over a 50-year period. Forest certification is a market-based, non-regulatory conservation tool that is gaining momentum across the forest products supply chain. The RAFT program is actively pursuing forest certification across the major timber producer countries in Southeast Asia to promote responsible forest management and trade from the forest, through the timber supply chain, to the end consumer. For additional information on RAFT please go to <http://www.raftprogram.org/>

Implementation of New Legislation Supporting the Legal Timber Trade

On December 10, 2008 a seminar on "Changes in International Timber Trade Legislation," held in Jakarta, Indonesia, was attended by over 120 representatives from timber industries, non-government organizations, and government agencies. The seminar highlighted recent amendments to the U.S. Lacey Act and the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Legislation Proposal. The event was hosted by the U.S. Embassy

Implementation of New Legislation Supporting the Legal Timber Trade (cont'd)



Seminar on Lacey Act and FLEGT Legislation Proposal © USAID

in Jakarta and the Delegation of the European Commission to Indonesia in collaboration with the Ministries of Forestry and Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, and was supported by USAID's Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT) program. Presentations from the US Department of Justice and others increased participants' understanding of the legal requirements under the new legislation and the implications for stimulating legal trade in timber products. When fully implemented, these legislative changes will benefit both timber-producing and consuming countries, through reduced demand for illegally-sourced wood products, enhanced support for companies that practice legal and sustainable forest management, and increased tax revenues and support for effective natural resource governance.

A French Look at the Upper Mekong Region

In February State Department staff attended a seminar on the Upper Mekong Subregion at Chiang Rai's Mae Fah Luang University. This 4th annual conference, supported by the French Embassy in Bangkok, highlighted France's ongoing engagement in the Mekong Region countries. The conference addressed key socio-economic issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion, including: the environmental impact of hydropower facilities on the Mekong River; cultural preservation cooperation among the region's countries; and the economic effects of expanded regional trade and investment.

NGOs Cooperation in Combating the Illegal Wildlife Trade

On March 3-7 NGO Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV) hosted the "NGO Cooperation in Combating the Illegal Wildlife Trade" meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam. Twenty-five participants across the region participated in this meeting to include Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in China, Mongolia, Indonesia, Laos, Indo-Myanmar, Conservation-Myanmar, MYCAT-Malaysia, ProFauna International-Indonesia, Freeland-Thailand, ACRES-Singapore, Wildlife Alliance-Cambodia, ENV-Vietnam, TRAFFIC-Malaysia, Green Eyes Environment Organization-China, and ASEAN-WEN-Thailand.

The goal of the meeting was to strengthen regional cooperation among NGO's in order to combat the illegal wildlife trading in Asia. This cooperation will facilitate information sharing amongst countries, which is important since the illegal trading cuts through all countries in the region. Participants shared lessons learned, and obstacles in combating wildlife crimes in their countries. Roundtable discussions were held with US Deputy Chief of Mission and ESTH officer from Vietnam, this was beneficial to participants who wanted to share their experiences and advocate for continued diplomatic support. For more information on ENV please visit: www.envvietnam.org

Fires in Burma, Laos and Thailand

On March 9, 2009 Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA's Aqua satellite passed over eastern Burma, Thailand and Laos and captured an image that showed multiple fires. Many are intentional fires for agriculture, brush clearing, and trash disposal purposes. To view the image [please click here](#).

Coral Triangle Initiative

The Manila Resolution was signed on October 23 and reaffirms commitment by the six states to conserve the Earth's greatest marine biodiversity zone. Delegates adopted a framework for CTI Regional Plan of Action that will be finalized and presented as a deliverable at the May 15, 2009 CTI summit meeting in Manado, Indonesia.

On October 27, 2008 the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#) pledged nearly \$40 million to support the international effort to save the [Coral Triangle Initiative](#), the world's greatest expanse of mangroves, coral reefs and diversity of fish, currently under threat from pollution, unsustainable fishing practices and climate change.

USAID and the U.S. Department of State will provide these new funds over five years to the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), a consortium formed to promote sustainable fisheries and coastal resource management programs in East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands.

The CTI seeks to protect 6 million square kilometers of ocean and coasts, an area that has been called the "Amazon of the Seas" for its biodiversity. The Coral Triangle, where the Indian and Pacific oceans meet, is home to 30% of the world's coral reefs representing 75% of the known coral species.

The six CTI countries, together with the CTI Secretariat and its technical support groups, will prepare national and regional plans of action to:

- Designate and manage "priority seascapes";
- Apply and "ecosystem approach" to the management of fisheries and other marine resources;
- Establish and manage marine protected areas;
- Apply measures to strengthen resilience and adapt to climate change;
- Strengthen procedures to improve the status of threatened species.

On January 28-30, 2009 delegates to the CTI agreed on an adjusted roadmap leading up to the CTI summit and reviewed the progress made by the Working Groups on Coordination Mechanisms, Finance and Monitoring and Evaluation. In March the CTI Regional Plan of Action reaffirming commitment by the six states to conserve the Earth's greatest marine biodiversity zone will be endorsed at Ministerial Meetings.

On May 15, 2009 following the World Oceans Conference the formal launch of the CTI will occur at which point adoption of the Regional Plan of Action and one concrete initiative for each country will be announced.

Cables: Bangkok 0322; Manila 0248.

Upcoming Events

April 2009

- USAID Avian Influenza Regional Partners Meeting. April 1-3, Bangkok Thailand.
- International Technical Workshop “The Forgotten Crisis: Arresting Wildlife Depletion in Asia through Strengthened Regional Cooperation and Effective Partnerships” April 11-13, Pattaya Bangkok.
- ESTH Conference April 15-17 Jakarta, Indonesia.

May 2009

- First World Oceans Conference. May 11-15 Manado, Indonesia.
- Formal launch of the Coral Triangle Initiative. May 15 in Manado, Indonesia.

June 2009

- DRAGON Asia Summit. June 22-25 Siam Reap, Cambodia. [Click here for website.](#)

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